

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /051 W
-----127020 191737Z /53

O 191613Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7367

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS: RESOLUTION

REF: A) BRUSSELS 11963, B) BRUSSELS 11342

1. PURSUANT TO HIS PROMISE TO THE KING TO MAKE ANOTHER
ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS
(REF A), TINDEMANS MET WITH VARIOUS MINISTERS AND PARTY
PRESIDENTS DURING WEEKEND OF JUNE 17-18. FOLLOWING A
MORNING MEETING JUNE 18 WITH A SELECT MINISTERIAL
COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF EACH OF THE
COALITION PARTIES, THE PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCED THAT
AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON THE THREE MAIN QUESTIONS
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DIVIDING THE MAJORITY.

2. AGREEMENT WAS AS FOLLOWS:

A) ADDITIONAL CREDITS NOT TO BE REQUESTED BY THE
MINISTERS OF SOCIAL WELFARE (BF 8 BILLION) AND
EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR (BF 9 BILLION). THESE AMOUNTS TO
BE FOUND INSTEAD THROUGH TRANSFERS WITHIN ALREADY-

APPROVED MINISTERIAL BUDGETS.

B) ACTION UNDER THE PROPOSED SPECIAL POWERS (REF B) TO APPLY ONLY TO THE EXECUTION OF THE 1978 BUDGET. EXTENSION OF THESE POWERS TO THE 1979 BUDGET WOULD REQUIRE FURTHER PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL.

C. WORK ON THE LEGAL TEXTS INCORPORATING THE AGREEMENTS REACHED UNDER THE EGMONT-STUYVENBERG ACCORDS TO BE ACCELERATED. A COMPLETED TEXT TO BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT BY JUNE 30. THIS TEXT TO BE DISCUSSED BY TWO SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES DURING THE MONTH OF JULY. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, NO COMMITMENT THAT THE QUESTION WOULD BE PUT TO A VOTE BEFORE THE END OF THE CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

3. IT WAS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT AGREEMENT ON THE FOREGOING WOULD BE QUICKLY RATIFIED AT A MEETING OF PARTY PRESIDENTS THIS MORNING (JUNE 19), AFTER WHICH TINDEMANS WAS TO HAVE REPORTED TO THE KING. THE SCENARIO THEN CALLED FOR THE KING TO MAKE FORMAL REFUSAL OF TINDEMANS' RESIGNATION, CLEARING THE WAY FOR RESUMPTION OF REGULAR GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY. THOUGH IT WAS GENERALLY THOUGHT THAT THIS WOULD UNROLL WITHOUT A HITCH, THE MORNING MEETING OF PARTY PRESIDENTS, WHICH CONVENED AT 0900, WAS STILL IN SESSION THREE AND A HALF HOURS LATER. THE PROBLEM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CENTERED AROUND THE PRECISE CONTENT AND TIMING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE I OF THE EGMONT-STUYVENBERG COMMUNITY ACCORD.

4. FINALLY, AT 1500 HOURS JUNE 19, THE PRIME MINISTER, ACCOMPANIED BY THE SIX PARTY PRESIDENTS, HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT WHICH IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE COALITION PARTNERS HAD REAFFIRMED THEIR DETERMINATION TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMUNITY PACT. IT WAS ANNOUNCED, FURTHER, THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD BE ASKED TO AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING TIMETABLE:

A) THE BILL ON THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE OF THE ACCORDS WOULD BE VOTED BY THE END OF DECEMBER 1978 AT THE LATEST IN ORDER TO PERMIT IMPLEMENTATION BY JANUARY 1, 1979.

B) THE BILL IS TO BE PRESENTED IN THE CHAMBER IN THE FIRST WEEK OF JULY 1978.

C) THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CONSIDERING THE BILL WILL MAKE ITS REPORT NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 5.

D) THE BILL WILL BE VOTED IN THE HOUSE DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER.

E) DISCUSSION OF THE BILL WILL BEGIN IN THE SENATE BY OCTOBER 1.

5. FOLLOWING THE PRESS CONFERENCE TINDERMAN'S REPORTED TO THE KING, WHO OFFICIALLY REFUSED THE GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION. THE PRIME MINISTER WILL LATER CONTACT THE PRESIDENTS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE AS WELL AS THE COUNCIL OF STATE TO SECURE THEIR AGREEMENT TO THE PROPOSED TIMETABLE.

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6. COMMENT. BARRING FURTHER HITCH, TODAY'S ACTION WOULD SEEM FINALLY PUT TO REST THE FIVE-DAY GOVERNMENT CRISIS PRECIPITATED BY TINDEMANS' JUNE 15 RESIGNATION. THOUGH OBLIGED TO ACCEPT A PRECISE TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNITY ACCORD THAT IS CLEARLY DISTASTEFUL TO HIM, TINDEMANS' POSITION WITHIN THE COALITION HAS PROBABLY BEEN STRENGTHENED SOMEWHAT AS A RESULT OF THE MINI-CRISIS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HOWEVER, WHETHER

THIS NEW AUTHORITY WILL TRANSLATE INTO REALLY SERIOUS
ACTION ON THE BUDGET FRONT. CHAMBERS

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